

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

Family Life in Islam

By Qazi Fazlullah

Islam insists upon unity and emphasizes the formation of positive human relationships and connections. The primary connection starts from within the family unit. In Islam the family system is based upon four pillars.

1. **Marriage**: The beginning of a family life begins with marriage. All those who have attained the age of puberty can perform their marriages on their own. But in order to preserve family ties and prevent discord and bad feelings, their marriage is subject to the approval of their guardians or as a minimum, without their vehement objection. Marriage is an institution not merely to satisfy physical and emotional needs but also a Sunnah of the Prophet (SAS). And not only it protects society from moral depravity, but also is a mechanism to preserve genetic lineage.

2. **Management of home**: Similar to the management of any corporation or company, the affairs of the home must have someone who is responsible for their management. This person must provide clear direction in order to conduct the affairs of the family so as to avoid any conflicts and preclude the possibility of any kind of confusion or disruptions that could negatively impact the home environment. And since the husband or adult male is responsible for outside the home affairs of the family, he should be given the responsibility for managing the overall family affairs inside the home as well.

3. **Companionship**: Since in a family unit everyone is a member of the same family, their mutual dealings with each other should be more like that as between colleagues or companions rather than a hierarchal relationship, as boss and a subordinate. Allah

(SWT) has said regarding your wives "Live with them (treat them) honorably". In this context Rasoolullah (SAS) has said, "The best one amongst you is the one who is kind to his wife". He also said "A woman who is obedient to her husband will get twice the reward for every good deed". He also said "When your child reaches the age of ten years, treat them as you would a brother or a sister". Because after that age children are reaching the age of puberty and their ability to reason and form their own opinions has almost developed, and treating them with respect is very important, so as not to alienate them.

4. **Love and affection**: Within a family it is imperative that there should be manifest love and affection between all members of the family. It is especially important for the father to make sure that his wife and children always feel loved. And it is the responsibility of the parents to raise their children not just merely taking care of their physical needs but also ensuring their proper spiritual, ethical, and moral upbringing as well, all while providing them with the best education. Rasoolullah (SAS) said, "The best gift that parents bestow upon their children is the best Tarbiah (proper upbringing, education and instruction in religious, moral and ethical values).

Unfortunately, it is especially difficult for Muslims living in western societies to inculcate many Islamic values in their children. Values such as "Haya" (decency, modesty, bashfulness), "ghairah" (integrity, self respect, honor), self respect and respect for elders and love and affection for minors are so alien to western cultures. However, as Muslims our religion is the first and foremost priority in our life, and it is the object of

our existence. While in western societies religion is merely an optional consideration, a thing of secondary importance. Hence, for Muslim parents living in the west the burden of responsibility to ensure the proper Islamic upbringing of their children becomes considerably heavier. The impact of the explicit treatment of sexual topics in public schools and the blatant exhibition of nudity, profanity, and explicit sexual content in the electronic and print media makes it difficult for Muslims to protect their religious culture and their religious values.

So that is why the need to build full time Islamic schools for our children is so important. In these schools our children will be insulated from the counter Islamic influences that our children are subjected to in public schools. Often the undesired by-product of public school education is moral depravity, behavioral problems, ill manners, sexual permissiveness, and rampant drug culture which is prevalent in many public schools. But in our Full time Islamic schools our children can be sheltered from all such influences, and where they can be provided with not just Islamic education and values but can also be taught how to practice and inculcate Islam into their daily lives by their teachers.

In order to protect our children in this dangerous environment, we need to adopt Islamic practices at home. Most Muslim parents have a keen desire to see their children grow up to be good Muslims, but yet they themselves do not practice Islam. We see parents who go to the effort of bringing their children to Islamic Sunday School classes, and yet they merely just drop them off, never bothering to offer their Zohr

Salat, or attending any of the lectures. They treat the Masajid as a drive-through fast food restaurant, merely stopping quickly to pick up a burrito or some french fries.

Children will always emulate their parents, and this kind of hypocrisy is very confusing and damaging for children. They not only lose respect for their religion, but also their parents. They begin to question whether what they have been taught in an Islamic School is right, since their parents behavior is in direct contradiction to these teachings. Things like the five daily prayers, the mandatory Hijab for women, and such essential teachings of Islam that are emphasized in schools, are things that their own parents blatantly disregard. In fact the argument can be made that in the same way these kinds of parents probably cause more damages to their children in alienating them from Islam than anything that could be done to them in public schools.

Perhaps, to make it easier to understand we can use the example of the Space Shuttle as a similitude for the development of a child. The Space Shuttle needs its two booster rockets, one on each side, along with its main engine to reach orbit successfully. The failure or malfunction of anyone of these three can result in a catastrophic disaster, and most certainly a loss of the mission and a failure in reaching low earth orbit. For the case of the child we can imagine that the teacher and the parents each serve as one of the two booster rockets and the child itself can be considered as the Space Shuttle with its main central engine. So as long as they all function together towards the same goal, working in harmony, the child will certainly stay the course and grow up to be on a good practicing Muslim. Shah Waliullah says, "The deeds of every individual are the direct result of their views, imagination and his concepts. Which are in turn governed

by:

1. Temperament

2. Environment

3. Association

Now, a human beings temperament or personality is a natural trait, and one has little power or ability to change it to any significant degree. However, environment and association are certainly factors that we can exhibit control over. As parents it becomes our responsibility to provide our children with the proper Islamic environment, and trying to limit the association of our children to only those people who will have a positive influence in their development. So as parents we should try to live with our own rules which we expect our children to abide by. Because children have a much heightened sense of what is fair. What is good for the goose is good for the gander.

Allah (SWT) has said in the Holy Quran. "Your wealth and your children are but a test/trial". Allah (SWT) also said, "Verily some of your spouses and children are enemies for you, so beware of them". This means that they will cause you trouble, not just in this life but also in the hereafter. In a Hadith Rasoolullah (SAS) said that the Angels would say regarding someone that their good deeds have been eaten or taken away by his family. This means that personally this individual was good, but he could not enjoin his family to the path of righteousness.

Allah (SWT) said in the Holy Quran, "O Believers! Safeguard yourselves and your family from the fire". So as Muslims we are bound to ponder upon this very important

issue and make an effort to keep our family intact, on the right track, this will not only give us peace of mind here, but it will be a source of prosperity in the hereafter. We therefore make a Dua to Allah (SWT): "Our Lord give us Hassanah (good deeds, better life) in this world and Hassanah (good reward, prosperity) in the hereafter and save us from the punishment of the fire". **Ameen.**